

## Topic

### ● I INTRODUCTION

#### ● A There are two basic ways to know the "Unseen" God

##### ● 1 Through the Bible

- a Experiences of God are communicated in writing,
- b Many people have communicated their experiences of God
  - (1) I do it in sermons
  - (2) Other priests, ministers do it also
  - (3) There is a wide variety to the experiences of God that are shared in this way -- some of them clash
    - (a) Some testify to a God of love
    - (b) Some seem to reflect a God of punishment
- c All the experiences of God included in the Bible are guaranteed by God to be accurate
  - (1). [1] God is actually experienced -- the experience was not some psychotic fantasy
    - (a) God is experienced correctly -- He has not been confused with the authors' feelings and ideas
    - (b) But not all that God is was experienced by any one author
      - [1] Otherwise only one booklet would have been needed
      - [2] And different aspects of the same God wouldn't be revealed through different books
        - [a] MK: Jesus is so human He is barely seen as divine
        - [b] JN: Jesus is so divine He is barely seen as human
        - [c] MT: Jesus is not only divine but He is also with us -- with the Church, with this believing community
        - [d] LK: Jesus is presented with a special love for the nobodies of the world
  - (2). [2] This experience has been accurately shared

##### ● 2 Through the Sacraments

- a The sacramental signs are also symbols that reveal God
- b Not all of God is shared through any one Sacrament
- c But God is accurately shared

#### ● B Each way allows for possible errors in interpretation

##### ● 1 Bible, Word -- the experience of God gets lost by accenting individual phrases, verses, statements

- a Protestants seem more prone to make this error
- b The Fundamental, literal, reading of the Bible puts the spotlight on individual phrases
  - (1) This selective reading can make it more difficult to experience God
  - (2) Sometimes a total distortion is possible:
    - (a) Fear replaces love as the basis of the relationship with God
    - (b) Judgment replaces salvation as the basis for religion

##### ● 2 Sacrament -- the experience of God gets lost by seeing the ceremonies as religion, not as signs intended to reveal different facets of God

- a Catholics seem more prone to make this error
- b Religion becomes "magic" -- it is no longer a personal relationship freely entered into
  - (1) The accent of faith is put on "doing the ceremony right"

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- (2) People feel it is important, vital, to say each word as it is; to do each gesture precisely as specified -- the way the old Mass used to be celebrated
- (3) The Spirit of the performance is less important than the mechanics of the performance
  - (a) The new Mass instructions (after Vatican Council) reverse this tendency
  - (b) A priest should celebrate the Mass in a way that allows people best to experience Jesus
- c Sometimes a total distortion is possible -- God seems to be controlled -- manipulated by performing ceremonies correctly
  - (1) We lose the sense of "gift," of "grace"
  - (2) Holiness seems to be the result of what we do -- we are forgiven because we go to Confession,
    - (a) Not because we have a God who is constantly forgiving
    - (b) Not because receiving the Sacrament allows us to accept this forgiveness -- but not to cause it!
- C We need to guard against the underlying cause of both these errors
  - 1 By going behind the Word to know the God who is revealed, experienced
  - 2 By going behind the sign to know the God who is revealed, experienced
- II SACRAMENTS -- INTRODUCTION
  - A Terms
    - 1 The Baltimore Catechism offered a definition -- most older American Catholics learned this definition suggested by the 2nd Council of American Bishops at Baltimore in the 1800's
      - a "A sacrament is an outward sign
      - b Instituted by Christ
      - c To give grace."
    - 2 Few theologians accept this as the best definition for us because it can lead to unnecessary problems
      - a "Instituted by Christ" -- the Scripture doesn't always bear this out
        - (1) Some of our Seven Sacraments do seem to have been instituted by Jesus according to the scriptures
          - (a) Baptism: "Go therefore..."
            - [1] Matthew 28:19
              - [a] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
            - (b) Eucharist: "Do this in memory..."
              - [1] 1 Corinthians 11:23
                - [a] For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took a loaf of bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, "This is my body that is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."
                - [b] 25 In the same way he took the cup also, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.
      - (2) Some seem to have a possible Scriptural foundation
        - (a) Holy Orders: Jesus requests that we "do this"
          - [1] The request implies the need for leaders to preside at the meal
        - (b) The Anointing of the Sick: the "elders" are told to anoint the "sick"

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- [1] James 5:13
  - [a] Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. 14 Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord.
  - [b] 15 The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up; and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven.
- (c) Reconciliation: Peter, first, and the disciples, later, are told "whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven"
- [1] Matthew 16:19
  - [a] I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you [singular to Peter only] bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."
- [2] Matthew 18:18
  - [a] Truly I tell you, whatever you [plural for all the disciples] bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.
- (3) Some, however, do not seem to have any direct Biblical narrative of institution
  - (a) Marriage
  - (b) Confirmation
- (4) Therefore, the attempt to prove Jesus instituted each Sacrament can lead to stretching the evidence
- b "Give grace" is actually redundant
  - (1) "Grace" means "give"
  - (2) The definition seems to make "grace" a thing
  - (3) Grace is the experience and reality of a loving God touching our lives
- c It is better to see the Sacraments as implicitly instituted by Jesus when/as He set up the Church
  - (1) To continue to preach Him
  - (2) To make Him present
- d Since He wants to serve our needs, the Church (His continuing presence) should do this
- 3 A much better definition is that a Sacrament is a
  - a "Visible sign
  - b Of an invisible reality"
- B "Human Sacraments" --
  - 1 Applying the term to everyday life can help us understand the term when we use it in religion
  - 2 Here are a few examples of signs we use and what they signify
    - a Smile = friendship
    - b Birthday cake = mom's love
    - c Wedding ring = wife's love
    - d Fist = anger
  - 3 The "visible sign" must be properly understood in regard to the invisible reality
    - a It doesn't produce the invisible reality
      - (1) The wedding ring does not create the love it reflects
      - (2) Nor does the fist cause the anger
    - b There is no "magic" to the sign

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- c The invisible reality "causes," leads to, the visible sign
- 4 The "invisible reality" is actually more real than the sign
  - a It is present before
  - b It is present during
  - c It is present after
  - d It lasts when the sign ends, is lost, or is destroyed
- 5 Human signs can lie
  - a I can smile when there is hate, not friendship, in my heart
  - b Society ladies tend to do this as a form of public politeness
- III RELIGIOUS SACRAMENTS
  - A The Great Invisible Reality is God!
    - 1 We have never directly experienced our God
    - 2 Natural religions are man's attempt to express an understanding of an invisible God
      - a Many men throughout the world sense there is a Power
      - b They try to explain it/Him starting from their human understanding
    - 3 These religions actually recreate God in the image of fallen man!
      - a Their god, (gods,) is (are) understood like a human dictator, a king
      - b He/she/they seek honor and service from subjects
      - c He/she/they punish all disobedience
    - 4 Jesus came and showed us that the "natural religion's" image of God is 180 degrees wrong
      - a The true God seeks to serve not be served
      - b This God dies (gives supreme and total love) for sinners (for all the disobedient)
      - c He never punishes anyone! -- "Neither do I condemn you..."
        - (1). John 8:1
          - (a). But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. 2 At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered round him, and he sat down to teach them.
          - (b). 3\* The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group 4 and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery.
          - (c) 5\* In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" 6\* They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him. But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger.
          - (d) 7\* When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." 8 Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.
          - (e) 9\* At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. 10 Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no-one condemned you?"
          - (f). 11\* "No-one, sir," she said. "Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."
  - B Jesus is the Sacrament of the Invisible God, of the Father
    - 1 Everything that constitutes our God took on human form
    - 2 The Invisible Reality becomes visible
    - 3 He shows us that our understanding of God is completely backwards

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- a The confusion of our views is made evident from an overview of His ministry
- b **His whole ministry was one of serving us**
  - (1) **His Birth**
    - (a) **God comes to us -- We don't go to God**
    - (b) **God unites with us -- We don't have to unite with God**
    - (c) **The union is lasting**
      - [1] **He weds Himself eternally to human flesh**
      - [2] His presence was not just a "visit"
      - [3] He becomes part of, one with us
  - (2) **His Ministry**
    - (a) **Jesus again seeks us out**
      - [1] He comes to where we live
      - [2] He traveled from town to town to find us
    - (b) **He didn't set up court in Jerusalem and issue invitations or summons**
    - (c) He didn't demand responses -- He simply asked to serve
    - (d) **He served all legitimate needs**
    - (e) Each act performed by Jesus is a "sacrament" in itself -- they reveal the inner heart of God
      - [1] **His healing = God wants us healthy, whole**
      - [2] His teaching = God wants us aware of His love for us and of our dignity
      - [3] **His feeding = God wants us to be complete, full, the whole persons He created us to be**
      - [4] **His raising the dead = God wants us alive**
      - [5] **His forgiveness = God wants us OK**
      - [6] His chasing "unclean spirits" = God wants us to be part of society
  - (3) **His Death**
    - (a) The crucifixion is both reality and sacrament
    - (b) His love is complete, total
    - (c) His service is absolute; it can't be taken back
    - (d) It is given for all -- "Father forgive them"
  - (4) **His Resurrection**
    - (a) **His love is and will ever be victorious**
    - (b) There is nothing we or any force in the universe can do to kill it
- c But: Jesus is now invisible -- and has been for 2000 years
  - (1) **All the actions of Jesus have been experienced by others**
  - (2) All have been reported by others
  - (3) In short, Jesus, today, is invisible to us
- **C The Church is the Sacrament of Jesus who is now invisible to us**
  - **1 "You shall be my witnesses"**
    - **a Acts 1:8**
      - **(1) But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."**

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- **2 The Spirit of Jesus has been given to the Church -- Pentecost**
  - **a Acts 2:1\***
    - (1) *When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place.*
    - (2) *2\* Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting. 3\* They saw what seemed to be tongues of fire that separated and came to rest on each of them.*
    - (3) *4\* All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*
  - b "Spirit" is the word used to describe a life force; it refers to that which makes Jesus Jesus
  - c His Spirit, His own life force, acts in us and through us
- **3 The 2000 year history of the Catholic Church attests to this**
  - a Throughout the centuries, wherever there has been a legitimate need, the Church has responded
  - b **Most religious orders were set up to meet such unfulfilled needs**
    - (1) Today's universities were rooted in Church schools trying to keep learning alive during the Dark Ages
    - (2) Hospitals grew out of religious orders tending to the sick
    - (3) Orphanages arose because religious orders began caring for the homeless
    - (4) Mother Theresa was the most prominent example in my lifetime of this ministry continuing
      - (a) No one was caring for India's lowest caste until her community of nuns helped them
      - (b) No one was caring for AIDS patients in the US; her community of nuns began such a ministry
- **4 Sadly, not every action that everyone in the Catholic Church does reflects the Spirit of Jesus**
  - a The 2000 year history of the Church proves this
  - b **Some acts seem neutral**
    - (1) Bingo, Bazaars
    - (2) Notre Dame football games
  - c Some seem to be the opposite of what the Spirit of God wants
    - (1) **The Inquisition**
      - (a) Jesus always put love over truth; He never rejected anyone for false or wrong beliefs
      - (b) From Easter onwards the Catholic Church and most other Christian churches have usually done the opposite
        - [1] **They have put truth before love, rejecting and killing people for "heretical" ideas about the faith**
          - [a] **Jesus calls people to follow Him despite their believing religious errors when He calls them**
            - {1} In Mark, the more He teaches the disciples, the less they believe!
            - {2} And yet He stays with them and allows them to stay with Him to be part of His group, His Church
          - [b] **On Easter, He appears to people who didn't believe in His announcements of the Resurrection**
            - {1} To Peter who three times had denied knowing Him
              - {a} Luke 24:33\*
                - ((1)) *They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together 34\**

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and saying, "It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon."

- {2} To all the disciples
  - {a} Luke 24:36\*
    - ((1)). While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 37\* They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost
- {3} He invites "heretics," the hated Samaritans, to know His love and help without any demands that they first correct their erroneous beliefs
  - {a} John 4:4\*
    - ((1)). Now he had to go through Samaria. 5\* So he came to a town in Samaria called Sitar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. 6\* Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour.
    - ((2)). 7\* When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, "Will you give me a drink?" 8 (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)
    - ((3)). 9\* The Samaritan woman said to him, "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) 10\* Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."
    - ((4)). 11\* "Sir," the woman said, "you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water?....
    - ((5)). 13 Jesus answered, "Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again. 14\* but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life."....
    - ((6)). 25\* The woman said, "I know that Messiah" (called Christ) "is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us." 26\* Then Jesus declared, "I who speak to you am he."
- [c] And Jesus tells the Church in Acts that they, too, will be witnesses to these same heretics
  - {1} Acts 1:8\*
    - {a} But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."
- 5 Our problem then becomes
  - a When does the Church accurately reveal Jesus?
  - b When is the Church truly His "Sacrament?"
- D The Seven Sacraments make visible in one time and place the universal Church
  - 1 These seven acts of the Church were guaranteed by Jesus to be accurate expressions of His witness, His Spirit
    - a They correctly express His invisible Spirit
    - b They may not do it the best
      - (1) These seven are simply guaranteed to not be misleading
      - (2) They are guaranteed to be accurate mirrors of Jesus
      - (3) There are examples that show the witness to Jesus better than the sacraments do

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- (a) Marriage with all pomp and social ceremony does tell the world that Jesus weds Himself to us
- (b) Mother Theresa ministering to the unwanted, helping them experience their dignity and place in life may better express the heart of Jesus than poorly celebrated Sacraments
- **2 Jesus guarantees that when any of these seven signs are performed, are made visible, He can be experienced**
  - **a Since there are "seven"**
    - (1) No one of them can completely express Jesus
    - (2) We need to combine the experiences they reveal in order to obtain a richer picture
  - **b The Sacraments in this respect are like the Bible**
    - (1) Because no one booklet can completely express Jesus, many booklets are needed
    - (2) The different Gospels offer varied experiences of Jesus
    - (3) We need to consider each NT booklet to enrich our experiences of Him
- **3 Jesus is experienced in the "action," the visible sign**
  - **a For years, I thought the "sign" was a thing**
  - **b Then I listened to a tape by a theologian**
    - (1) He taught that a "thing" can never express a Person
    - (2) He went on to say that an "action" can do this
    - (3) The tape changed my grasp of the Sacraments and what they tell us of Jesus
      - (a) Not the "bread," but the "breaking of the bread" is one of the Eucharistic signs
      - (b) God shows He must "break Himself" to feed us
        - [1] He needs to give Himself for us
        - [2] He needs to die for us
        - [3] He needs to drain His heart for us
      - (c) Bread alone could never communicate this; the breaking is needed
- **4 Each individual Sacrament has its own unique sign**
  - **a Baptism -- the sign is full immersion, dying**
    - (1) Jesus fully immerses Himself in us
    - (2) He invites us to fully immerse ourselves in Him
  - **b Confirmation -- the sign is a commissioning with oil**
    - (1) Jesus is fully commissioned to love us
      - (a) We are formed completely in and by His love, "conformed"
      - (b) We are formed by the Father, in the image of the Son who gives all of Himself to serve us
    - (2) He invites us to form ourselves in His love
      - (a) We are invited to serve others
      - (b) We are invited to serve them as He serves us and others
      - (c) We are invited to discover that we are more than just loved; we are so loved that we are able to love as we ourselves are loved
  - **c The Eucharist -- the signs are the breaking of bread and the sharing of the cup; a common meal is shared by a community**
    - (1) Jesus is giving Himself fully to us
      - (a) He feeds "us," not just me as an individual



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- (b) His feeding forms us into a community
- (2) I should in response, be willing to feed others
  - (a) To break myself to serve their needs
  - (b) To give myself to form our community, His community the Church
- (3) I, in turn, should remain willing to be fed by others, by all others in the Church
  - (a) To receive them fully into my heart
  - (b) To make their concerns my concerns
- d Holy Orders -- the sign is the imposing of hands by a bishop who receives another bishop, priest, or deacon into a group set aside to serve
  - (1) **Sadly, the sign is very distorted today;**
  - (2) Priests expect respect and homage from the very people they should be serving,
  - (3) Jesus gave service and washed feet
  - (4) That service is the sign "...as I have done, you must also do"
    - (a) John 13:12
      - [1] When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them.
      - [2] 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am.
      - [3] 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.
      - [4] 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.
      - [5] 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.
    - (b) We must all allow Jesus to serve us
    - (c) We must be willing to give ourselves in service to all others in the circles of our lives
- e Marriage -- the signs are a bride and groom offering themselves fully to each other in love with no reservations and no end to the giving
  - (1) The sign reminds us that Jesus is giving Himself to us with no reservations and no end
  - (2) He will never divorce us
  - (3) He asks us to relate to others by loving them in the same unconditional and unending manner
- f Reconciliation -- the signs are words and actions making a sinner fully part of the Communion of Saints, the Church
  - (1) The signs remind us that Jesus is reconciling us to the Church
  - (2) He invites us to reconcile others to the Church
- g The Anointing of the Sick -- the sign is Jesus "medicating" us
  - (1) The sign tells us that Jesus gives Himself to us so that we'll be fully healthy
    - (a) He's concerned with all that we are, the body included
    - (b) His love is not confined to a "soul"
  - (2) **He wants us to relate to others to offer them full health also**
    - (a) Not to limit our concern to prayers for their souls
    - (b) To be as concerned for their physical health as we should be about their spiritual health
- **5 These Seven Sacraments don't/can't lie**
  - a Human signs can -- like a false smile

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- b Other Church actions can
- c These Seven accurately reveal Jesus

### ● IV CONCLUSIONS

#### ● A Remember the sign shows what Jesus is always

- 1 Catholics need to remember this in order to keep them from seeing the Sacraments as magic
- 2 Jesus always is acting as the Sacraments reveal, not just when one of the Sacraments are experienced
  - a Jesus is always feeding us
  - b Jesus is always immersing Himself fully in us
  - c Jesus is always reconciling us
- 3 He doesn't limit His acting to just those moments we experience a particular Sacrament
- 4 Rather, we should experience each Sacrament to learn through it anew what Jesus is, how Jesus is serving us

#### ● B The same is true of the Bible -- each booklet reveals the eternal Jesus

- 1 Protestants and Catholics need to remember this
- 2 We shouldn't get lost in phrases and words: normally they don't save anyone
- 3 We must go behind them to discover the God who saves,

#### ● C The Sacraments are always signs for the entire Church

- 1 We've made some of them "private" experiences
  - a Baptism
  - b Confession
- 2 And we've made attendance at others by invitation
  - a Marriage
  - b Confirmation
- 3 We interpret them primarily from these private experiences
  - a Consequently, we focus upon the moment of reception: the visible sign
    - (1) I was taught, (wrongly,) how long Jesus remained within a person after Communion
    - (2) We were told it was only until the bread was dissolved in the stomach
  - b What I was taught was not the message of the enduring invisible reality
    - (1) Jesus is the Bread of Life and the Cup of Saving Joy
    - (2) He is always feeding the hunger of our hearts, quenching the thirst of our spirits
    - (3) And He is always, by the gift of His Spirit, creating us into a community, a fellowship, of believers
- 4 The Sacraments are not just for the recipient
  - a Remembering this keeps them from being "magic" by which we attempt to control God
  - b They remain symbols by which God always chooses to touch us
  - c Jesus is wedding Himself to each person always, not just to a bride and groom at the moment of their marriage

#### ● D The Sacraments are signs for the whole world, as well as for the Church

- 1 Jesus is serving the whole world; not just the Catholic/Christian Church
- 2 When seen as being performed for whole Church, the invisible reality stands out more clearly
  - a It exists before the sign

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- *b It exists with the sign*
- *c It endures after the sign*
- 3 He does not love us more than He loves pagans; He does not feed us more than He offers to feed pagans
- **E The Sacraments tell us what our God is like**
  - 1 **Always**
  - 2 **For each of us**
  - 3 **For all of us**
- **F They correct a lie of early American Christian history, Pilgrim history**
  - 1 There is an angry Father wanting to punish us -- Cotton Mather preached on "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God"
  - 2 God is kept from hurting us by a caring Jesus
  - 3 The Sacraments show us
    - a The Church which shows us
    - b Jesus who shows us
    - c The Father who is revealed as what He is
      - (1) Always
      - (2) For each of us
      - (3) For all of us
  - 4 Our God is always reconciling each of us with each other
- **G We must understand what happens when we receive a Sacrament**
  - 1 **The reception doesn't give us more love -- that's magic**
  - 2 The sign tells us that God is always giving us love and service as reflected in some specific action
  - 3 **The Sacrament offers us an opportunity to relate with Jesus as He relates with us**
    - a To allow ourselves to be fed by Jesus
    - b Not to be starved by world
  - 4 **The reception is our opening ourselves to be fed by Jesus**
    - a We involve our whole person in so doing
    - b We do not just involve our "spirits," "souls," "hearts," "minds"
    - c I make a **physical effort to come forward and be fed**
      - (1) I open myself to God's love
      - (2) I display a willingness to receive the whole Body of Christ, the whole Church
- **V REMEMBER:**
  - **A Religion is not**
    - 1 **Cult -- (Sacraments)**
    - 2 **Creeds -- (Bible beliefs)**
    - 3 **Ceremonies -- (Bible and Sacramental rules)**
  - **B Religion is not things; nor is it actions**
  - **C Religion is a relationship with a person**
  - **D Religion is Jesus, Jesus our Christ**
    - 1 The Bible reveals Him

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- 2 The Sacraments reveal Him
- 3 But **He, not the Bible or the Sacrament, saves**
  - a **They do not save**
    - (1) Miserable Christians read the Bible
    - (2) Miserable Christians receive Communion and the other Sacraments
  - b **Jesus saves -- He offers a "peace the world cannot give"**
    - (1) The ability to be OK
    - (2) The ability to accept ourselves as we are and accept others as they are